



March 30, 2005 (Report on the February 23-24 Meeting of the National Leadership Council)

NLCJournal

The National Leadership Council (NLC) convened February 23-24 in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area in Thousand Oaks, California. Superintendent Woody Smeck hosted the NLC as they toured the park and considered a range of management issues.

Wednesday, February 23, 2005

I. Welcome and Call to Order

Director Fran Mainella opened the two-day meeting with a morning session covering a wide-range of NPS management issues.

A. Management Succession/Washington Office Detailees

First on the Director's agenda was the topic of Management Succession, and her plans to recruit detailees to serve various assignments in the Washington, DC office. The Director expressed a desire to expose field personnel to the Washington environment; to improve understanding of workplace roles and practices between field and WASO staff; and to provide a flexible working environment where managers could share ideas and discover ways to work together more efficiently and effectively. The concept was well received by the NLC, and Mike Snyder and Jim Poole have been assigned the task of developing the detailee program for NLC consideration (*Task I.A.*). This would include exploring an increase in the travel ceiling by categorizing these details as training opportunities and performance enhancement measures.

B. Call for Regional Office and Park Unit Accomplishments

The Director talked about the value of sharing NPS success stories and accomplishments with the Department. She asked the NLC to provide demonstrations via briefing papers of projects and accomplishments that show how NPS is accomplishing our goals and meeting the department's needs (*Task I.B.*). She will share these

success stories during regular meetings with the Secretary and department officials.

C. Topics for Upcoming Superintendent's and Zone Meetings

The Director requested that NLC members work together to develop a set of core mission areas that will be shared at all upcoming regional conference and zone meetings. The Director discussed the need to focus NPS management efforts toward specific strategic outcomes, and suggested that regional superintendent meetings and zone meetings provide an excellent opportunity for leadership to focus their management staff on common, service-wide agenda items such as building better partnerships, civic engagement and public involvement, the 100th anniversary of the NPS in 2016, and conducting Core Operations Analyses. The Director also discussed the importance of improving superintendent skills and training in areas such as concessions, contracts, and public relations with the media and Congress. The NLC suggested working with the Director's Legacy Goals to develop a set of common themes. Acting Deputy Director Mike Snyder is following through on this task (*Task I.C.*).

II. Santa Monica National Recreation Area Overview and Tour

Superintendent Woody Smeck provided a brief presentation and overview of issues and challenges at Santa Monica NRA. The primary issues the park faces are development sprawl, heritage education, connecting communities to the land, and urban interface and wildland fire.

Following the morning session, Woody Smeck led the NLC on a tour of Santa Monica Mountains NRA. The NLC had the opportunity to meet park staff and learn about specific park programs and management issues. Arriving at the Satwiwa Native American Indian Culture Center, Ranger Jack Gilooly and volunteer

National Leadership Council

Fran Mainella

Director

Randy Jones

Deputy Director

Donald W. (Don) Murphy

Deputy Director

Sue Masica

Associate Director
Park Planning, Facilities,
and Lands

Bruce Sheaffer

Comptroller

Dwight Pettiford

Chief

United States Park Police

Michael (Mike) Soukup

Associate Director
Natural Resources
Stewardship and Science

Jim Poole

Acting Associate Director
Administration, Business
Practices, and Workforce
Development

Chris Jarvi

Associate Director
Partnerships, Interpretation
and Education, Volunteers,
and Outdoor Recreation

Karen Taylor-Goodrich

Associate Director
Visitor and Resource
Protection

Dr. Janet Snyder Matthews

Associate Director
Cultural Resources

Steve Martin

Regional Director
Intermountain

Ernie Quintana

Regional Director
Midwest

Joe Lawler

Regional Director
National Capital

Mary Bomar

Acting Regional Director
Northeast

Jon Jarvis

Regional Director
Pacific West

Pat Hooks

Regional Director
Southeast

Marcia Blaszak

Regional Director
Alaska

leader Eli Dickerson spoke to the NLC about the successes of the EcoHelpers program, one of many park volunteer and partnership efforts. EcoHelpers teaches Los Angeles area students the importance of healthy watersheds and native ecological communities, while providing hands-on experience in streamside restoration. Their current project is a restoration project in Solstice Canyon, the location of an important perennial stream that provides habitat to endangered southern steelhead trout.

Dr. Ray Sauvajot, Chief of Planning, Science, and Resource Management, then discussed the park's ongoing research into major habitat linkages, and described the success of research with the California Department of Transportation to study the use of cross-highway habitat corridors by large predators. Later, the NLC toured the Gillette Ranch, a major partnership acquisition and future home to offices for Santa Monica Mountains NRA, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, and Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority. That evening, Santa Monica Mountains Fund and the park staff hosted a reception to welcome the NLC and National Park Foundation (NPF) incoming President and CEO Vin Cipolla, and Vice-President Nancy Bechtle.

Thursday, February 24, 2005

III. National Park Foundation— Welcome, Introduction, and Discussion

The Director led the NLC in welcoming two guests: Incoming National Park Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer Vin Cipolla; and new NPF Vice-President Nancy Bechtle. Vin Cipolla is a nationally recognized leader in the preservation, arts, fundraising, and business communities. He currently serves as the President and CEO of Veritude, a Fidelity Investments company, and is the former Executive Vice President of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. He has been a major proponent and fundraiser for the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, where he led the effort to develop of the first new museum to be built in Boston in 100 years. Mr. Cipolla will assume his new duties in April 2005.

Nancy Bechtle assumed leadership of the Board in early February, succeeding David Rockefeller, Jr. Ms. Bechtle is the chairman and director of the Sugar Bowl Corporation and a director of the Charles Schwab Corporation, and has served on a number of boards and foundations. She brings to the NPF a life-long enthusiasm for the outdoors and a passion for the arts and culture. She has been a very successful non-profit fundraiser for the San Francisco Symphony.

In comments to the NLC, Mr. Cipolla and Ms. Bechtle emphasized their common interest in working closely with the NLC to build a better vehicle through the NPF to carry out the mission of the National Park Service, beginning with the Junior Ranger program. Vin and Nancy both talked about working more closely with the NLC and WASO to explore the best ways for their organization and the NPS to learn from each other and capitalize upon each others' strengths—park management and leadership, and corporate thinking and philanthropy. The NPF wants to look carefully at the “system” of parks, to integrate natural and cultural management into their activities and thinking. Vin and Nancy also expressed enthusiasm about the agreement between the NPS and NPF subsequently signed February 28, which, for the first time ever, lays out the roles and responsibilities of the two parties. The agreement comprehensively delineates all prior policies, procedures, and agreements that govern the relationship between the NPS and the NPF. Both the NPS and NPF expressed their strong desire to look strategically at how the NPF can best contribute and be involved with NPS leadership, and work together toward common goals.

IV. Director's 4-Year Legacy Initiative

Acting Deputy Director Mike Snyder shared with the NLC the status of the Director's Legacy Initiative and 4-Year Plan. Titled “Doing Business in the 21st Century,” this initiative will help focus the management agenda of the National Park Service for the next four years. The Legacy contains five overarching goals—Management Excellence, Outdoor Recreation, Conservation, Sustainability, and 21st Century Relevancy. The NLC is in the process of defining these goals in more detail through objectives and specific tasks to prepare the NPS for the future (*Task IV.A.*).

The goals and objectives were developed by a process facilitated by Regional Director Jon Jarvis with field and WASO leaders. We anticipate the Legacy Initiative will be completed in the next few months. Questions or comments on this effort can be directed to Mike Snyder. The NLC agreed that a component of each NLC meeting/phone call should include a discussion about strategy and progress on one or more of the legacy objectives (*Task IV.B.*). It was also discussed that a public affairs strategy be developed to help communicate the legacy and goals to parks (*Task IV.C.*).

V. Proposal on Ranger TV Series

Deputy Director Don Murphy introduced Dr. Larry Eastland and Bob Klosterman, both of whom have extensive experience in media markets and the entertainment industry, to discuss a concept for a television series based on the real-life incidents of National Park Service rangers. Although fictionalized, the concept calls for plots based on actual incident reports, with episodes filmed in national parks. The producers' goal is to capture in a weekly story setting the grandeur of the parks and the good work that is occurring in them, and to share those stories with a wide television audience. NLC members expressed interest, as well as concerns about sensationalizing the work of park service employees, and the possibility for encouraging unwanted or illegal behavior. Deputy Director Don Murphy agreed to continue a dialogue with the producers, and will put together a working group to explore the opportunities and obstacles to the producers' TV series concept (*Task V.*).

VI. NPS Scorecard

Comptroller Bruce Sheaffer updated the NLC on the development of an NPS Scorecard. The Scorecard is an analytical tool designed to help NPS integrate budget and performance, and provide for transparency in the funding of park operations. An outgrowth of the Total Quality Management process, the Scorecard sets a defensible, explainable approach by which NPS can evaluate park budget performance and compare parks one to another as well as to other agencies over time. It reflects an incentive management approach focusing on leverage, and efficient and effective operations. When

fully implemented, likely during the FY2007 budget process, the Scorecard will help managers ask smarter questions about budget justifications and allocation decisions. The Scorecard has been developed with input from the field, and is undergoing testing and further review.

VII. Asset Management

Associate Director Sue Masica updated the NLC on issues associated with deferred maintenance and our asset infrastructure. By Executive Order dated February 2004, each agency is to develop an Asset Management Plan and establish a scorecard for asset management priorities. NPS is assisting DOI in this effort, so that the departmental approach is consistent with what NPS is already doing. Consistent with the DOI strategic plan goals, NPS is facing expectations to demonstrate a change in facility/asset performance through improved FCI scores. This is challenging even though the comprehensive condition assessments will not be completed servicewide until the end of FY 2006.

NPS has been asked to develop a new method for setting asset investment priorities that incorporates the use of FCI and API scores. Projects that do not demonstrate a significant change in condition are likely to have a harder time obtaining approval. NPS must refine its capacity to identify which portion of a project cost is dealing with repairing/addressing identified deferred maintenance deficiencies, and how much of the project cost is associated with capital improvements. (For example, on a \$1 million project that only contains \$250,000 in true deferred maintenance repairs, and only \$250,000 is counted toward improving the FCI, while \$750,000 is classified as new capital improvements). Because greater emphasis will be placed on improved efficiency – in terms of FCI – of dollars spent on projects, future projects that include elements such as program changes, function changes, or building size increases for example, are likely to be placed at a scoring disadvantage.

Concurrent with the asset management business practice changes, NPS is meeting the President's commitment to spend \$4.9 billion towards the maintenance backlog goal. Achieving this goal in FY 2006 is dependent on enactment of the

FY 2006 budget and the pending Highway Re-authorization bill.

Associate Director Masica also discussed the need to update PMIS project records. The Director's office uses PMIS information to meet data calls and develop reports that are routinely requested by the Director and the Secretary's staff – usually on a very short turnaround time. Like last year, Masica's office will again develop a comprehensive list of projects that identify the projects undertaken with the various maintenance fund sources. Unlike last year, her office will not be going through the regions to verify the data; rather, they will pull the data directly from PMIS, and will depend on the accuracy of that data for the report. Parks and regions will be held responsible for the accuracy of the data in PMIS (*Task VII*). Masica reminded the regional directors of the Director's 12/16/04 memorandum on this subject.

Lastly, the NLC reviewed the status of fee demonstration funds and the importance these funds have in meeting the President's deferred maintenance funding commitment. NPS is the only agency to have a specific dollar target for deferred maintenance expenditures out of fee revenues. NPS has been directed to increase the amount of obligations from fee demo for deferred maintenance in FY 2005 and FY 2006. To achieve these goals will require a significant improvement in obligations from the largest parks. NPS is carrying a significant unobligated balance in fee revenues – nearly \$240 million. Of the unobligated balance, 75% rests in the 13 largest fee-collecting parks. Regional Directors were provided specific information about accomplishments and unobligated carryover at these parks.

VIII. Mid-Level Intake Program

Acting Associate Director Jim Poole and Regional Director Marcia Blaszk reported on the status of implementation of the next Mid-Level Intake Class. In response to suggestions from the NLC, the Mid-Level Intake Program will be changed to reflect the needs articulated by the Regional Directors. The proposed training program, titled the Mid-Level Management Development Program (MLMDP), will focus on current career employees at the GS-11, GS-12,

or WG equivalent. Each Region and the Washington Office Deputy Directors will select two participants for a total class of 16 candidates annually. The selectees will remain in their current position, and receive training over a 2-year period. Modeled after the Executive Core Qualifications for the SES program, MLMDP participants will be educated through formal courses, self-study projects, detail opportunities and shadow assignments based on 27 leadership competencies to evaluate and develop effective leadership skills. The NLC discussed the need to add to the curriculum: business management skills such as budget, effective supervisory skills, dealing with difficult people, and the importance and mechanics of conducting a core operations analysis to ensure more efficient management (*Task VIII*). The NLC approved the MLMDP program pending final comments on the program proposal.

IX. Law Enforcement

Special Agent Todd Swain gave a presentation on Operation Indian Rocks, a 2-year, interagency law enforcement effort resulting in criminal convictions for the looting of archaeological sites on Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, and Air Force properties. The investigation recovered over 10,000 looted artifacts, including Native American remains, and resulted in numerous convictions, including the largest fine in a criminal ARPA case ever.

Following Special Agent Swain's presentation, Associate Director Karen Taylor-Goodrich led a discussion on several law enforcement issues, including enhanced pay, 6C retirement, and the 025 series. Taylor-Goodrich reported that while the enhanced pay issue has been resolved, the Visitor and Resource Protection staff would work closely with the Regional Directors to find options for addressing ongoing concerns regarding 6C retirement and the 025 Ranger Series. The Regional Directors expressed strong interest in being actively involved in these issues. Karen committed to providing regular updates on these issues during each NLC call (*Task IX.A*).

Of particular interest to the NLC was the drafting of Department Manual 446 on Law

Enforcement, currently underway. A number of Regional Directors commented that their Regional Chief Rangers had reviewed the draft DM 446, and had shared their comments and concerns with the Department. Taylor-Goodrich suggested that her office lead a task force to collect, review, and present all comments in

a strategic manner to clarify NPS/Department roles and responsibilities under DM 446 (*Task IX.B*).

Upcoming NLC Meeting

June 21 & 22 in Washington, DC

Task List

| Reference | Task / Followup | Responsible | Date |
|-----------|--|--|---|
| I.A. | Develop detailee program for NLC consideration | Mike Snyder & Jim Poole | May 1, 2005 |
| I.B. | Provide 1 page briefing paper of recent accomplishments and projects that demonstrate meeting NPS and Department goals | Steve M to coordinate NLC input | Begin Late April; ongoing |
| I.C. | Develop set of common themes from Director's 4 year legacy goals for topics at future Superintendent and Zone mtgs | Mike Snyder | April 15, 2005; for ongoing use |
| I.V.A. | Complete 4 year legacy objectives and tasks document | Mike Snyder to coordinate with NLC input | April 1, 2005 |
| I.V.B. | Ensure every future NLC call addresses at least one of the 4 year legacy objectives for discussion on strategy and progress. | Brian Sweatland | Begin in April when goals are final; ongoing |
| I.V.C. | Develop an internal "marketing tool" and public affairs strategy to communicate 4 year goals to parks | WASO; Quinley; Linda Wright | After goals are final; finish mid May |
| V. | Assemble working group to explore opportunities and obstacles to the TV Ranger series | Don Murphy | Immed. |
| VII. | Update regional and park PMIS databases to ensure accuracy so that WASO can pull info directly from system for data calls | RD's | Immed. |
| VIII. | Add Business Management skills to Mid Level Intake curriculum | Jim Poole | Immed. |
| IX.A. | Provide regular updates on LE issues of concern for each NLC call | Karen Taylor-Goodrich | Immed. and ongoing |
| IX.B. | Develop LE briefing paper that highlights proposed changes to DM 446; hold call with RD's. Prepare strategy/rollout to Dept., communicate progress on 6c issues to NLC | Karen Taylor-Goodrich | Prior to April 8 (extended due date for DM 446 comment) |